

## MISCELLANEOUS.

*On Wolves Suckling Children.* By the Honourable F. EGERTON.  
Communicated by Sir RODERICK I. MURCHISON.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

16 Belgrave Square, July 19, 1851.

GENTLEMEN,—The annexed extract from the journal of the Hon. Capt. Francis Egerton, R.N., who recently travelled in India with Lord Grosvenor, was sent to me by his father, the Earl of Ellesmere, with this remark:—"It is odd that the same tale, like that of Sinbad the sailor, should extend to the Highlands. I got a story identical in all its particulars of the wolf time of Sutherland from the old forester of the Reay; in which district Gaelic tradition avers that wolves so abounded, that it was usual to bury in the Island of Handa to avoid desecration of the graves."

On referring the case to Professor Owen at the late Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Ipswich, the following was his reply:—

"I have read with much interest the wolf story, and do not see very great improbability in it; but it could not be accepted at the Zoological Section because the facts are related at second-hand, the rule being that an observation must be communicated by the observer."

Under these circumstances, I think it right to give publicity to the little narrative of Capt. Egerton, which, although possibly printed in India, has not to my knowledge, nor to that of Professor Owen, been made known in England.

If this story be substantiated, may we not, after all the scepticism of the day, go back to the belief of our childhood, that Romulus and Remus were really suckled by a wolf?

Your very obedient servant,

RODERICK I. MURCHISON.

*The Wolf Story.*

February 14, 1851.

Colonel Sleeman told me one of the strangest stories I ever heard relative to some children, natives of this country (Oude), carried away and brought up by wolves. He is acquainted with five instances of this, in two of which he has both seen the children and knows the circumstances connected with their recapture from the animals. It seems that wolves are very numerous about Caunpore and Lucknow, and that children are constantly being carried off by them. Most of these have of course served as dinners for their captors, but some have been brought up and educated after their own fashion by them. Some time ago, two of the king of Oude's sowars (mounted gens d'armes), riding along the banks of the Goomptje, saw three animals come down to drink. Two were evidently young wolves, but the third was as evidently some other animal. The sowars rushed in upon them and captured the three, and to their great surprise found that one was a small naked boy. He was on all-fours like his companions, had callosities on his knees and elbows, evidently caused by the attitude used in moving about, and bit and scratched violently in resist-

ing the capture. The boy was brought up in Lucknow, where he lived some time, and may for aught I know be living still. He was quite unable to articulate words, but had a dog-like intellect, quick at understanding signs and so on. Another *enfant trouvé* under the same circumstances lived with two English people for some time. He learnt at last to pronounce the name of a lady who was kind to him and for whom he showed some affection, but his intellect was always clouded, and more like the instinct of a dog than the mind of a human being. There was another more wonderful but hardly so well-authenticated story of a boy who never could get rid of a strong wolfish smell, and who was seen not long after his capture to be visited by three wolves which came evidently with hostile intentions, but which after closely examining him, he seeming not the least alarmed, played with him, and some nights afterwards brought their relations, making the number of visitors amount to five; the number of cubs the litter he had been taken from was composed of. I think Col. Sleeman believed this story to be perfectly true, though he could not vouch for it. There is no account of any grown-up person having been found among the wolves. Probably after a certain time they may have got into a set of less scrupulous wolves, not acquainted with the family; the result is obvious.

Col. Sleeman has, I think, published an account of one of these wolf-boys, but I forget where.

#### CARCHARIAS VULPES.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

Weymouth, July 12, 1851.

GENTLEMEN,—The following are further particulars of the Fox Shark (*Carcharias Vulpes*), a notice of which appeared in the 'Annals' for this present month of July. The extreme length from snout to tip of the tail 12 feet. Length of tail from base to tip 6 feet. Girth in the largest part 3 feet.

This fish was caught on Saturday, the 21st of June, in a mackerel seine shot in the West Bay from the Chesil Beach. It was apparently in pursuit of a schull of mackerel.

When inclosed in the seine it occasioned a great deal of damage by constant blows of the tail.

This shark had evidently been on the coast for some days, as a man, Jonah Fowler (who by the bye is quite a naturalist in his way, and an excellent person with whom to go dredging), told me he was in Portland Roads a day or two before the shark was caught (in the Fairy Yacht) and saw the dorsal of some very large fish floating slowly towards him; he got ready his boat-hook, and as the fish came alongside he attempted to hook it, but not penetrating it merely frightened the fish, which immediately dived almost perpendicularly, at the same time making a great splash with its tail. It was of a purplish colour in the water; he has since seen the subject of this notice, and at once identified it as being of the same species, and probably it is the same individual.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,

WILLIAM THOMPSON.